

Corpus of American Civil War Letters
A12-01, William B. Gilliland

Source: The Mississippi Valley Collection, University of Memphis Library
MS.54-136, Gilliland Civil War Letters

William B. Gilliland (b. ca. 1825) was a farmer from Aurora, Marshall County, Alabama.
He served in Co. E, 22nd Alabama Infantry.

Transcribed by Casey White, August 2008
Proofed and corrected by Michael Ellis

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Aprile the 24th 1863
Camp Buckner Near Talladega Ala

My Dear & Mutch beloved Companion it
is alone through the kind dealings of
Almity god that I am blest withe the
presant opper tunity of writing to you
to lety you no that I am in Resonabel
helth and I hope when these few lines
comes to hand that they may find
you & the Children all well & doing
well I have nothing Strainge to right
to you at present Dear wife I want
to Se you all very bad I want you all
to do the best you all can for I think
that I will come back Soon but I can
tell when we are cooking our Rashions
now for 2 days and we leave this plais
at 7 Oclock in the morning to go to
Tinisee I have some of my Kneighbors with
me dear wife I will rite to you as soon
as I get to where I have to stay then
I want you to rite to me and let me
no how you are all gitting a long Dear
most dearly beloved wife & children
[page 2]

I want you to remember me & Dear children
I want you to mind what your mother
sayes to you & be good children to one a
nother till I come home a gane & then
I can tel you all labout it bud I want
you to forgive me for leaveing be fore
you got back from mill but I want

to Sea you verry bad but I dont
no when I will git the chance but
bee a good boy til I come home agane
Marthy I want you to draw all
of the money you can Dont write
to me till you here from me agane
So I must close for this time for it
is late in the nite So I will close
for this time by saying farewell
to you all in Bands of love
W^m B gilliland to his beloved
wife & litle children in love to
all

[Addressed to]

Mrs Marthey J.
Gilliland
Benitsville Ala
from W^m B. Gilliland

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Gilliland

A few lines to Marthy jane
May the 1 1863 Shelbyville Tennessee
I am in the tolerabel helth & i am tol
larble well satisfide as mutch so as
could be expected for me to be to
be away from hom & exposed to all
of the privations of a camp life &
i truly hope that this will reach your
hand in due time & find you all well
& doing well dear companion I do
want to se you & the god blessed
little children may god bless you
all withe all the blessings boath spir
itual & temporal that his all seaing
eye Seas that you do stand in nead
of to make you happy while in this world
& in the world to come & bless you
withethe best of helth til i come home a
gan if ever i do i want you to rite
as soon as you git this & let me how
you are gitting along give me all of
the nuse you can about every thing
& how you are giting along withe
your crop & i want you to let me
[page 2]

no all about the children how thay
are doing tell them that i want the
m to be good children & mind what
you say to them tel little James
to be a good boy Marthy i want you
to kiss little frank for me bless his
sweat little hart i dont no what i
would give to sea you & him & sea you
kiss him & kiss you my selfe I want
the connection to rite to me i have
not forgot them i want to no
whether you have herd from John
or not i cant here from him i found
James nelums here he is well we are
not in the same ridgement but
i se him every day i have nothing
interesting to rite to you so i will close
by saying god bless you all direct
your letters to Shelbyville Tennessee
W^m B. Gilliland th22 Ala. Regt. Co. E

in keer of Capt Mardica
W^m B Gilliland to Marthy J Gilliland
& family in bonds of love fare well

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Shelby villy Tennessee May the 17th 1863
My Dear & dearly beloved Companion
it is alone through the kind protection
& mercy of all mity god that I am blest
withe the privelege of riting to you to let
you no that miself & mack Donald is as
well as common at this time & i truly hope
these few lines may find you & the dear
children & the connection all well &
doing well i can say to you that i have
bin verry sick withe something like the
flux but i am up & about & able to doo
duty i feel weak & bad i have something
like the gravel that hurts me verry
bad at times but i am giting along better
than i expected i think that i am doing
fine & and as well satisfide here as i co
ld be any whare to be in this trubble
som war & exposed to all of the privat
ions of a camp life i dont think that
this war will last verry long for all
of the men that i have heard talk
a bout it is tierd of it now & they are
deserting & leaveing here every day mor<?>
[page 2]

my Dear & mutch wife i can not expre
ss the love that i have for you & the
loving little children in a letter for
you twine a round mi hart in love
my dear little children i want you to
be good to your mother & minde what
She Says to you & be good children & be
good to one another & good to your aunt
lithy & to every boddy & love your cre
ator & pray to him & ask him to bless
you & me withe every nedy blessing
bouth temporal & spiritual that his
all seaing eye Seas that we do stand
nead of to prepare us in life for liv
ing death for dying. Marthy i want
you to rite to me as soon as you git this
withe out fail for i want to here fro
m you so bad that i dont no what
to do i have rite too letters before
this & i have got no answer rite &
be shure all the nuse you can & tel

W^m Webb & Stepen & Louis & wash
ing Harris all to rite to me & give
all of the nuse they can about
every thing

[page 3]

<??> <??> i saw James Pellums this morning
he is as well as common & sends his love &
best respects to you all thomas Smith is
her & well he says that Jasper Webb left
to go home & got to a private house in
lincorn county & thare died mi be loved
wife I can Say to you that I do want to
See you & my dear little cildren the worst
i ever did in my life o when i think of
you and them & think of the Situation that
we are now plased in & the distance that
we are apart it grieves my hart but i do
hope & trust & pray that we will be per
mitted to Se each others fond fases one tim
more in this life & that before long i want
you to rite to me & let me no how you are git
ting along & how you are makeing out for
Something to eat & how your Stirs is doing
& how you are gitting along withe your
crop how your Stirs works & how your
cows is doing & how your wheat looks
& i want you give me all of the nuse
you can about the connection & all
about every thing you can turn
over

[page 4]

Dear wife i want you to git Some of
the boys put them big puncheons
over the well in the place of that
oald plank for fear it brakes &
lets some of you fall in & i want
you to have the well cleand out &
i want to no whether you have heard
from John Webb & John Walker or not
& what my <Z?>ell is doing i must quit
I will close by saying may god bless
you all farewell for this time in love
W^m B. Gilliland To Marthy Jane
Gilliland & friends in bonds of love
A few lines to father mother & W<elde?>
i drop you these few lines to let
you no that i am in common health
at this time & i truly hope these few

will find you the happy Sherers of
the Same like blessing for which we
should be Thankful dear father & mo
ther i want you to pray for me &
mi famly & tel all the old frends
to pray for me To John Webb
W^m B Gilliland Jane Webb in
bonds of love

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Camp Near Shelbyville

Tennessee May 30th 1863

Dear Wife and Children it
is through the mercies of god
I am permitted to take my pen
in hand to in form you that I
am in Tolerabel helth at this
time and I hope when these few
lines comes to hand that they may
find you all injoying the best
of helth I have bin very Sick
last week and a part of the wee
k before but I am now abel for
duty I want you to rite to me
how you & bud is geting a long
with your Stears & crop how they
perform I received your kind
leter bareing dait the 18 instant
which gave me grait satisfaction
to here from you and to here you
all was well and doing the saim
I recived your letter the 26 it
come in 8 days I want you to rite
often as yo can

[page 2]

I will now give you the si<t>ua
tion and the description of Soaldiers
fair as fare as I have tride it wi
are in the bend of duck river one
Mile below Shelbyville in the sha
dyest grove of beech poplar and
hickery a Butyfalis plais for
a camp I think I cold get a long
with the duty of a soaldier if I
cold keep well and cold get a pl
enty to eat but we have the porst
beef her to eat you ever sean in
Your lif<et?> we are alowed 1 pound
of it per day and 1 ¼ lb corn meal
Some times we git 1 days rashins of
flour it only lasts 2 meals when
we get Bacon we only get ½ lb to
the man a day weget rise and peas
once and a while I want you to make
all you can of corn and potatoes & to
baco and when you have eny thing to

sell So you must excuse me for
this time So no more at present but
remains yours truly untill deathe
To Martha Gilliland W. B. Gilliland

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Camp Near Shelbyville Tenn, June the 14th 1863

My dear & Mutch beloved wife & little
childring & connection all it is alone thr
ough the murcy & kind protection of all
mity god that i am blest withe the presant
oppertunity of droping you a few lines in
order to let you no that mi self & Mcdonald
is as well as common to day & i truly hope
these few lines may reach your hand in due
time & find you all the happy sherers of the
same good blessing for which we should be
thankful to the grate giver of all good my
dear wife i can say to you that i received
your kind letter dated May the 18th which
give me grate satisfaction to here from you
one time more & to here that you was well but
i was sorrow to here that mother has bin sick
but i am in hopes that god will restor
hur to perfect helth a gane Marthy i can say
to you that i do want to sea you & the
dear little children the worst i ever did
in mi life May god bless you & them with
the best of helth til i come home a gane is my prare –
[page 2]

dear wif i can Say to you that i am
glad to here that you are gitting a
long withe your crop so well & that
you was makeing out verry well for So
mething to eat for i was a ferd you could
not manage the Stears it has relieved mi mind
a grate eal to here that your wheat looked
well & that you was gitting a long every
way as well as what you are & I am in hopes
that you will continue to do well til i come
home a gane if i am <??> to come home a
gane i think i will git to come before ver
ry long but i dont no when nor how th
at will be i some times think that this
un just war will have to close soon
then a gane i think it will last some time
yet i want you to make all you can of
every thing that will do to eat Sutch
as corn & peas & potatoes & everything bud
make all of the tobacco you can for it is w
orth too dollars pr plug bud i am glad
to here that you are a good boy & that you

are doing all that you can to keep your
mother in good hart about me that is rite
[page 3. This page may not be from the same letter]
you rote to me you wanted to know
how I was making out for Close I dont want
you to make me eny Close for I have to
draw my Close So you may rest contint
ed a bout that I dont want you to
make eny close at all you rote to me you
wanted to know what we got to eat we
get 1 half pound of Bulk pork to the man
a day & 1 pint of corn meal & of beef we get
1 pound of that a day in the plais of Pork
when we draw flour we get 1 pound & $\frac{1}{4}$ of
a pound to the man we draw somedays
1 mess of peas a week & 1 mess of Rise the
Saim that is our rashins in full you can
See how Rich we live here in the armye
it is hard living here but we make
out we have to by some Times a litel
meal to have bred to eat now I will
give you the description of produse Buter
is worth 2 dollars a pound Milk is worth
50 cts a quart out in the cuntry chickens
is worth from 2 to 3 dollars a peas Turkeys is
worth from 3 to 5 dollars a peas

[Rest of letter missing]

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

June the 26th 1863

Camp Near Shelbyville Tenn

Dear Wife and children it is with the graitist of pleasure
that I Seat my Self to drop you a few lines
to let you know that I am in comin helth
at present & I hope when these few Lines comes
to hand they may find you injoying the
graitst of helth I received your kind which
gave me grait satisfaction to here from you
& to here you was all well & all of the connection
was well I recived yours of the 11 of June whi
ch was the 2 leter I have receive from you
I am glad to here you are geting a long so well
with your crop & that your wheet is good &
you got it took keer of I am glad to here bud
it geting a long with his cop & stears bud I want
you to go it and do all you can & try to mak
all you can to eat for your Mother and sisters
& litel Brother & for me a gainst I come home
My dear children I want you all to be
good Children & mind your mother untill I
come home I think through the merseys of
god I Shall be per mited to get home after a
while but I do not know when

[page 2]

I have Seen James Nelums this morning
he is as well as comin and Sends his love & respe
cts to you & the connection all and wants you all
to rite to him I Saw Cravin haris here & he wants
Washington to rite to him he is in the 26 Ala
Regt in Company I he was well and so fat I
did not know him and passed him by as
a strainge I also Seen Franklin On<??> the
other day he was in tolerabel helth I have rote
to the boys at war traits to know if they
had herd from H.J. Gilliland and I have not
got eny answer from them and when you rite to
me a gain if you have herd eny thing a bout him
I want you to rite for I want to here from him
Tell W. C. Webb to not think hard of me nor
none of the Connection for not riting a seperate leter
to him a bout Jasper I have not herd eny thing
more than you have all redy received for
the old man that told us a bout him has
forgot the mans name where Jasper died at
and we aint find out eny more a bout him

unless it Shold be by chance thes things is hard
but gods will mus be done and let us not complain
[page 3]

I want to Se you all very bad you statid
in your leter that the children was all taking
on a bout me I dont want them to do that at
all for there is no use in that ~~that~~ nor I dont
want you my dear to think long of my absence
for if its gods holy will I will soon return
home & may his will be done with us all and
may we be resined to his will we are exp
ecting a fight here we are fixin for it ever
day a thorowing oup Brest works I dont know
when we will fite but it is thaw we will fite
Shortly we have a heep of very hevy duty to
perform such gard & working on Brest works
I am a detail 1 day to the Brest works and the next
day I go on guard we get a plenty of Bred to eat
now we have no rite to grumble a bout our
rashins such as it is and we aut to feel thank
full that it is no worse with us than it is I
feell thankful that it is no worse I will say
to you wheet crops is very good here corn crops what
I have seen looks fine it is raining & has bin 2 days
we have had a heep of rain here all this month
[page 4]

My dear Wife & children I caint rite to you
how bad I do want to Se you all and I hope
I will be sparn and you all blessed and I shall
be enabld to get home soon I want all of the
connection to remimber me in there prares
and I want to Se them all and I want
them to rite to me Simeon McDonald
is riting this for me he is as well as comin
we are in the saim Mes I want you all to
do the best you can I must come to a close
for this time by daying I sill Remain
yours in Bonds of love untill death

W^m B Gilliland

To Wife & Children

Friends I want you to rite to
me and not fail Rite all of the
nuse you can and how ever thing
is going So Farewell for this time

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

Camp of 22^a ala Regt near Chattanooga Tenn July 25/63

My dear companion I seat myself this morning

to address you a few lines which will in

form you that I am well at this time

hoping this will find you and the

children all well and doing well

I recd your kind letter of the 10 of this

inst which was a great satisfaction

to me to hear from you I have but

little to write at this time we are doing

very well considering the hardness of

things the rations are short you wanted

to know how I got along on the march

well I stood it mighty well tho it

was a hard march and many give

[line indecipherable because of fold]

the march and done without rations

a good deal of the time but now we are

getting enough to make out on

the health of the soldiers is very good

here at this time you say you want

to see me very bad and this I don't doubt

but I don't suppose you want to see me

any worse than I do you & wish it was

so that I could get a furlow to

go home to spend a few days with

you but I don't so no chance now

but I will try that I will come –

[page 2]

as soon as I can you said something

about coming to see me <??> but

I rather you would not come all

tho I want to see you so bad

this is no place for a woman

you said you wanted me to <come?>

home to eat butter with you but as

I can't come if you have it to spare

I would be glad you would send me

some by Brother H P Gilliland if he

comes this way tell him I want him to

come by and stay a day or 2 with me

and I would like for you to

send me a pair of socks if you

can conveniently but don't put

yourself to no trouble about it

I saw neloms this morning he was well
as comon I was sorry to here of your
Mothers sickness <but?> I hope her health
will be restord in a short time
write as often as you can and let
me know how you <is?> gitting a long
nothing mor at present your husband
as ever until Death Wm B Gilliland

William B. Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

<?> Picket Line Aug the 30th, 1863
Near Chatanooga Dear and affectionate
Wife it is a gain through the merseys of god
I am permitted to Seat my Self to drop you
a few lines to let you know that I am well
and I am in as good helth as I have bin in
Some time and when these few lines comes to hand
I hope these few lines comes to hand they may
find you and the Children & all of the con
nection well I have nothing very good to
Right to you at present we are one one Side of
the river & the yankeys on the other They have
bin Shelling Chatanooga Severl times they have
killed 3 men & wounded one litel girl & shot one
or 2 shells through the hosspitel we aint <???n?>
of them oppisit ou<?> her but they are firing on
our pickits a bove & below us once and a while
but they dont do eny harm to our picket the report
is there is a Briggaid of yankeys at Trenton some 18
Miles South of us on the Saim Side of the river we are
and they rumer is they are crossing the river a bove
but I dont know whether they are crossing up <???>
er not I dont know whether we will have a fite
here or not it is the Jineral opinion ~~that~~ we
wont fite here the men Say if they have to go
in to a batel they wont fite for they Say it wont
be eny use for we are all redy whiped the men
is leaving here jus a bout as fast as tey come in or a litel faster
[page 2]

My Dear Children you all express you want to
Se me so bad but I know you dont want to Se me
eny worse than I do you I think through the mer
seys of I shall be enabeled to Se you all a again in
a short time for I think this thing will Shoreley com
to a close for it looks like that we caint stand it
much longer my dear I received the Biscuit & pies
& buter & money you sent me by Simeon & I was
very glad to get it and all so to here from you all
once more and to here you was all well & to here
the connection was all well but was Sory to here
that Mother Webb had a nother one of them bad
risings I hope that peas on earth once more may bee
restored both Nationaly & privatly & that god will
Smile on us as a nation once more if it can comport to
his hevanly & devine will is my prare for Christ Sake

James Nelums is not well at this time but he was
beter yesterday than he has bin he was in his Quarters
I think he will be abel for duty in a day or too Mack has
got here and is on duty with me he does not know
what they will do with him yet but I dont think
they will punish him if they do I dont think they got
the weigh ever thing was and the weigh he come back
I was glad to her from you brother Steven and to here
was a going to rite me & the other boys a good leter I want
you to comply with that. My dear Wife I want to se you
the worst kind and you must excuse me for my short
leter So I must Come to a close by saying I Remain your
affectionate Husband untill death W. B. Gilliland.
To M. J. Gilliland in bonds of Love

Franklin Gilliland to Martha J. Gilliland

This february they 2th 1865
Camp of this 58th ala regt at holly <??> near
Mobeal ala on they Bay my Dear &
Much Beloved Sister Marthy J
Gilliland & Childrin one & all Sarah Jane
a <??> & John & littel James Jane & frank all
as one Marthy thank god i am this
Morning blest with they presant opertunity
of dropping you a few lins Which leavs me
Well Marthy i trust to god that thase
lines may soon reach you & find you & all
they Childrin all Well & doing Well Marthy
<????????>the relation <??> then
<????????> you that <????????>
<??> Boys is hear at Mobeal & we are all
well Marthy i can say to you that i want
to see you & they childrin they Worst in the
world tho i am away hear in this <??>
<??> i cant tell When i Will hav they
<??> to com to see you all but marthy i
<??> hop i wont be Bee long tillwe Will
hav they pleasure of seeing each other a gain
Marthy i no that you & yore littel childrin
seas a lonsom & desolat time tho I hope
that god Will bee with you in yore lonsom
<??> of troubel & that he may spar you to
[page 2]
live & bless you all with good health &
strength and Bless you all With <??> they
worthey Blessing that his all seeing eye seas
that you stand in need of While in this life
Marthy i hope that god Will spare
you to live to rase yore littel ilfant
Childrin god Bless them all i prey marthy
tell they childrin that i love you all & wishes
you all Well & to do Well marthy tell all
they childrin to be god childrin & try to prepar
to meat their father in heaven Where
parting will bee no more Marthy i Want
you to excuse me for not riting to you
for we hav bin Marching & fiting nearly all the
time [rest of line cut off by fold]
i hant got a letter from lisabeth in a long

time marthy i dont Want you & they childrin
to forget me & i want you to rite to me & let
me no how you air gitting a long i am very
ancious to hear from you all marthy they is a
grait talk of pease hear at mobeal now tho i cant
tell when we will hav pease tho i hope it wont bee
long till pease will bee made Martha i think
that i will git a ferlow to com home in a few
days We air campt rite on they edg of they mobeal
Bay & We can see the yankees gun boats evry day
i Will close rite soon Direct yore letters to me in
Co. H. 58th ala regt hoaltsclaws Bregade mobeal ala.
H.F. Gilliland to Martha Jane Gilliland & all
they childrin in lov to all franklin Gilliland to all